WHAT IS VICTIM OFFENDER MEDIATION ?

Victim Offender Mediation is a community resource that provides:

- The opportunity for young offenders to take direct responsibility for the harms their actions have caused their victims.

- The opportunity for victims to have meaningful and effective resolution of the harms they have suffered.

- The opportunity to resolve criminal and harmful incidents in a way that builds a safe and healthy community.

This process involves **face to face accountability** in a safe and respectful setting with the help of a trained mediator.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS ?

- **A fair and reasonable resolution** to the crime that allows victims to move forward with their lives with the knowledge that the crime has been dealt with in a way that addresses their needs;

- To enable offenders to take **meaningful responsibility** for their actions in a manner that encourages and strengthens their ability to be positive, contributing members of the community.

- To build and strengthen **safe, healthy communities** through an effective response to crime.

WHO PARTICIPATES ?

- Juvenile offenders are referred to the Victim Offender Mediation program by the Clark County Juvenile Court. Generally these referrals come from Probation Counselors who screen participants for appropriateness.

- Police officers and other court staff may also recommend youth for mediation.

- The primary focus of this program is on juvenile offenders whose crimes have clear victims and where a youth is generally a first time offender.

- Juvenile offenders whose crimes include many types of property crimes and some levels of assault. Malicious mischief, vehicle prowl, break and enter, theft and assault are all possible for referral.

WHAT RESULTS FROM VICTIM OFFENDER MEDIATION ?

- Young offenders are confronted with the human cost of their actions and challenged to take direct and meaningful responsibility for their action.

- A safe and respectful setting is created where victims may ask questions and share information regarding the offense in a way that assists them in finding meaningful closure to the crime.

- A safe and respectful setting is created that encourages offenders to be accountable and to take responsibility for their actions.

- There is a focus on the real harms caused by the crime and working toward offender accountability that truly addresses those harms.

- Community members, serving as mediators, are actively involved in the positive and effective resolution of crime in their own community…

BACKGROUND

The Victim Offender Mediation program is an initiative of the Clark County Juvenile Court and the City of Vancouver's Community Mediation Services. It is one of several Restorative Justice Programs that focus on enhancing the commitment of the City and County to addressing crime effectively in the community.

The need for victims concerns to be meaningfully addressed and to have young people be accountable for their actions are key values of this approach to strengthening the health and safety of our communities.

Victim Offender Mediation programs have been in use in North America for the past 25 years and, because of their effectiveness can now be found worldwide and in increasing numbers of U.S. communities.

**Restorative Justice Programs (360) 759-4454 – A joint initiative by
Community Mediation Services of the City of Vancouver and the Clark County Juvenile Court**

11/18/99

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE MEDIATOR ?

Mediation, at its heart, is a structured face to face meeting between the offender and victim (sometimes including additional appropriate parties that have been mutually agreed to).

A trained mediator whose role is to guide the parties through the simple stages of the meeting leads the meeting. Additionally the mediator has the responsibility to ensure all parties are treated respectfully, and that people are given ample opportunity to ask questions, share information and to respond to the comments of others.

The mediator is trained to assist people in speaking clearly and fully about their concerns and needs. It is not the role of the mediator to impose solutions on the parties. The mediator will assist the parties in finding a resolution that the victim and offender feel is fair and reasonable.